

Remarks/Arguments

Reconsideration of this application is requested.

Claims 6-11 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC §101(b) as being anticipated by Whitehouse (U.S. Patent No. 6,005,945A).

Whitehouse discloses the following in line 20, column 6 to line 12, column 7:

“A system for electronic distribution of postage includes at least one secure central computer for generating postal indicia in response to postage requests submitted by end user computers, and at least one postal authority computer system for processing the postal indicia on mail pieces. A key aspect of the system is that all secure processing required for generating postal indicia is performed at secure central computers, not at end user computers, thereby removing the need for specialized secure computational equipment at end user sites.

A typical secure central computer includes a data processor; and a database of information concerning user accounts of users authorized to request postal indicia from the secure central computer. A request validation procedure authenticates received postage requests with respect to the user account information in the database. A postal indicia creation procedure, applies a secret encryption key to information in each authenticated postage request so as to generate a digital signature and combines the information in each authenticated postage request with the corresponding generated digital signature so as to generate a digital postage indicium in accordance with a predefined postage indicium data format. A communication procedure securely transmits the generated digital postage indicium to the requesting end user computer.

Each end user computer typically includes a data processor and a communication procedure for sending postage requests to a secure central computer at which a user account has been established, and for receiving a corresponding digital postage indicium. A postage indicium printing procedure prints a postage indicium in accordance with the received digital postage indicium. Each postage request will typically include a user account identifier that identifies a previously established user account, a source address identifier indicating where a mail piece is to be mailed from, a destination address identifier indicating where the mail piece is to be mailed to, authentication information for authenticating that the postage request is from an end user associated with the specified user account

identifier, and data concerning the package size and/or weight sufficient to determine an amount of postage required for the mail piece. Each digital postal indicia will typically include data representing the user account identifier, source address identifier, and destination address identifier in a corresponding on of the postage requests [sic].

In a preferred embodiment, to avoid the need for digital signature certificates, a unique key identifier is assigned to each secret encryption key used to create the digital signatures in postal indicia, and each generated digital postal indicium includes data representing the key identifier of the secret encryption key used to generate the digital signature in that digital postal indicium.

Each postal authority subsystem typically includes a data processor and a database of information concerning the user accounts. A postal indicium validation procedure authenticates the postal indicium on each mail piece. The validation procedure includes instructions for decrypting the digital signature in the postal indicium using a decryption key corresponding to the key identifier in the postal indicium."

Whitehouse does not disclose or anticipate steps (c), (f) and (h) of claim 6 as amended, namely, running a postage meter application on said web server that communicates with at least one cost accounting table that includes the date of the meter transaction; the transaction identification, a list of user accounts, the meter account number; and the total count of pieces processed by the meter; identifying a user account for which a transaction is to be charged; and updating the cost accounting table with information relative to said transaction including the user account for which the transaction was charged. Applicants' claimed invention allows firms to separate charges for different departments to different account numbers. Whitehouse does not address the foregoing problem.

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The Examiner also mentioned Kara's U.S. Patent No. 6,233,568B1. Kara does not disclose or anticipate steps (c), (f) and (h) of claim 6 as amended.

In view of the above, claims 6-11 are patentable. If the Examiner has any questions, would she please call the undersigned at the telephone number noted below.

Respectfully submitted,



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